

MARXIST CLASS ANALYSIS



Jim Russell

This pamphlet was written in the Spring of 1976 as a result of numerous discussions and debates about the meaning and application of Marxist class analysis for conditions in the United States. The goals of the pamphlet are to contribute to the clarification of the basics of class analysis, provide a basis for critiquing pseudo-Marxist analyses, and most importantly, provide a basis for developing a fuller analysis--including the analyses of the class positions of oppressed nationalities and women, the particularities of which were beyond the scope of this project. All of these are pressing tasks for those of us in the anti-imperialist and socialist struggle.

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MARX'S CONCEPT OF CLASS -

A BEGINNING ELABORATION

by Jim Russell

Class analysis is the basis of the strategy for revolution and the study of history; the concept of class is a kind of prism through which Marxists view and understand the relationships of a society. Thus, no Marxist disputes the importance of class analysis--but there is considerable disagreement among Marxists about the method for actually making a class analysis.

There is a surprising lack of unity over the basics of class analysis. Researchers widely disagree about even the definitions, numbers, and compositions of classes. The problem is particularly acute in the United States where recent writings, all claiming the mantle of Marxism, have presented fundamentally different portrayals of the contemporary class structure.

Many analyses have been Marxist in name only--that is, Marxist terminology is used freely, but often with arbitrarily revised and sometimes even bourgeois meanings. Because, in short, the method of many of these studies is eclectic, it is important to reexamine the original method of class analysis pursued by Marx and Engels. The purposes of this brief essay will be first to elaborate the meaning of Marx and Engels' concept of class; second, to outline the development of classes from feudalism to capitalism; and third, to sketch the class structure of imperialism.

The purposes of this study are limited. Many of the developments described pertain more to the United States than elsewhere. The essay makes no pretense at being a full or comprehensive class analysis; it is only a preliminary methodological step. Most of the argument which follows deals with the abstract economic categories which determine where the major class lines

run in a society. As such, the essay does not deal directly with the particular class roles of minority nationalities and women. These critical questions need to be examined once the economic determinants of class have been established.

As many have noted, Marx and Engels were in large part responsible for the subsequent confusion of Marxists about class analysis. Marx and Engels never presented in one place a systematic treatment of the question. Their method remained largely implicit. The present task is to make explicit their implicit class analysis method. Three approaches underly this study: a collation of Marx and Engels' scattered comments about class, an examination of the results of their class analyses, and most importantly, a deduction of the method of class analysis from the overall historical materialist method.

The Dialectics of Class

Marx and Engels' concept of class has a two-fold meaning. Classes have both in itself and for itself dimensions.(1) No class analysis is complete without an analysis of both dimensions. The analysis necessarily begins though with the class in itself.

Ancient slavery, feudalism, and capitalism have been historical modes of production which required a class division of labor. Each of the modes of production divided people according to their position in the economic structure. That is, each mode of production structures different economic roles for the people. The major differences outline class categories; and the sum total of individuals within each category make up the class in itself. In short, the nature of the mode of production structures the fundamental class lines of a society.

The nature of the particular mode of production was always the material foundation of Marx and Engels' class analyses. The in itself aspect of class analyses emphasized the dialectical interrelationship between the economy, its tendencies, the class structure, and the structured life chances of people. The organization of a mode of production determines where the class lines will run through a society which in turn determines the overall inequalities of peoples' living conditions.

On a day to day level economic developments can be traced to their differential class effects. For example, in capitalist countries inflation generally benefits those who own property (capitalists for the most part) since property values go up; at the same time inflation adversely affects the propertyless classes for whom the only thing that goes up is their living costs.

By what criterion did Marx and Engels determine how to draw the class in itself lines for each mode of production? Marx and Engels concluded that each class in itself has a qualitatively different relationship to the means of production of a society. What then are the means of production? The briefest definition would be to state that the means of production are the means that labor uses to produce the wealth of a particular form of society. The means of production listed by Marx were raw materials, auxilliary materials, and instruments of labor.(2) At the core of historical materialism is the simple but profound idea that people in order to continue living must produce food, clothing, etc. The means by which they produce these necessities with their labor are in fact their means to life itself. Control of the means by which people produce is ultimately control of the people themselves. The particular form taken by the means of production however varies according to the mode of production.

Feudal societies are mainly agricultural and the tools available for production are relatively undeveloped. Labor is long and backbreaking, animal power is the highest source of energy available to the production process. The primary means used by labor to produce meager wealth is the land. Consequently, relationship to control of land utilization determines the fundamental class in itself structure of feudal societies.

Advanced capitalist societies, by contrast, produce wealth by means of much more highly sophisticated tools. In terms of energy available to the production process, nuclear power is a far cry from an ox. These highly sophisticated tools which become grouped in factories, laboratories, mines, stores, offices, and other workshops, together with the raw materials which are to be processed are capital property.

Consequently relationship to control of capital property utilization determines the fundamental class in itself structure of capitalist societies. The class in itself relationships to the means of production of feudalism and capitalism will be specified more closely below.

But, the in itself dimension is only one side of the question. Marx and Engels also wrote about the class for itself. It is one thing for an aggregate of people to share a common relationship to the means of production; it is quite another thing for those same people to come together and act politically from their common position. The for itself dimension emphasizes the dialectical interrelationship between the class and the making of history. The proclamation, "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle" in The Communist Manifesto assumes the development of classes for themselves. Classes develop for themselves when their members act on the basis of common interests which they understand to be distinct from and in opposition to the interests of one or more other classes. The class for itself, in sum, is forged through common struggle with other classes, common class consciousness, and common organization.

The two sides of class, the in itself and the for itself, were evident in a summary statement of Marx's about the mid-Nineteenth Century French peasantry. He essentially viewed the peasants as both a class and not a class at the same time; they were a class in itself, but not yet a class for itself. "In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class [in itself - J.R.] In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class [for itself - J.R.]" (3)

We can therefore say that although the in itself economic dimension is a necessary and the fundamental condition, it is not a sufficient condition for full class development. The for itself dimension of class

consciousness and class organization is also necessary.

The dialectics of Marx's concept of class are clear. Class formation from in itself to for itself is a tendency, not a static fact or given. The concept of class captures not only the statistical distribution of a people but also the developing subjective and organizational forces of a people. Classes are both made by, and makers of, history. The concept of class encompasses passive and active elements, determined and determining qualities, objectivity and subjectivity. Furthermore, as a tendency (that is, a developmental process) class formation inevitably involves contradictions. For example, while total class consciousness may flow automatically from class position in logic, it seldom does so in history. Many different types of factors can block or retard that development. Consequently, one of the tasks of revolutionary class analysis is to examine when, why, and where contradictions between class position and consciousness occur.

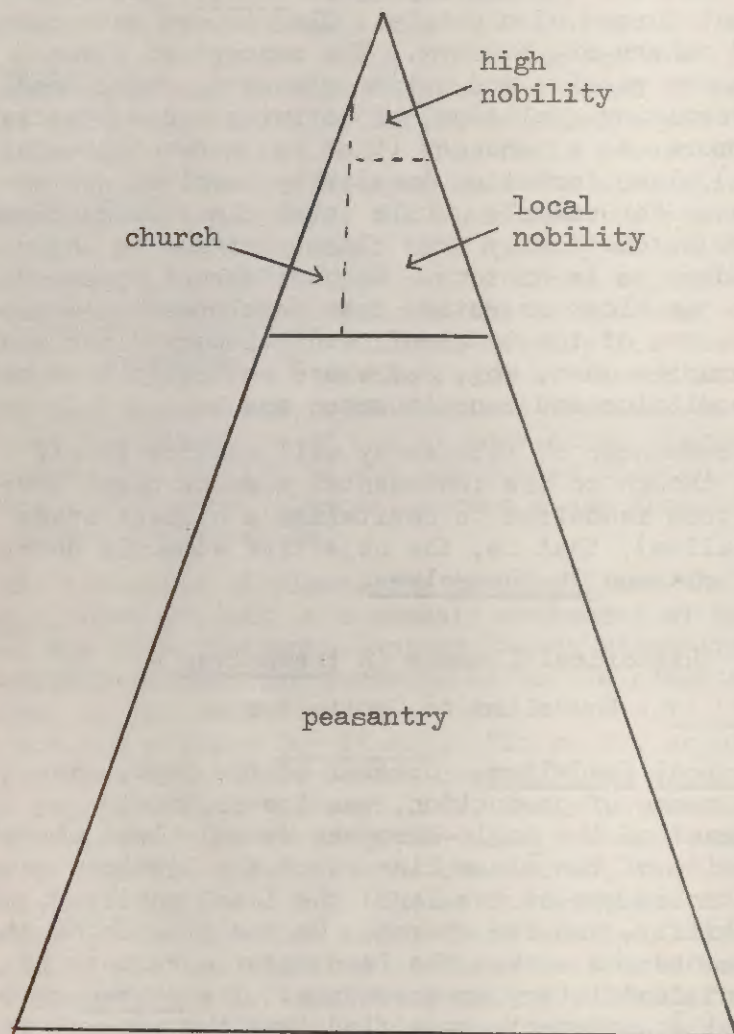
The remainder of this essay will confine itself chiefly though to the fundamental side of class development from feudalism to capitalism's highest stage (imperialism), that is, the objective economic development of classes in themselves.

Historical Classes in themselves - Feudalism to Capitalism

Classical Feudalism. Control of the land, the primary means of production, was the critical determinant of the Anglo-European feudal class structure. On one side of the class line stood the landlord estates who controlled use of the land: the local nobility, the high nobility, and the church. On the other side stood the peasants who worked the land under a variety of different feudalatory arrangements. The corvee system, a typical arrangement, specified that the peasant would work a set number of days on land used to feed his household and the other days on land used to support the lord's household. In another arrangement, the peasant simply handed over a set amount of the products of his household's labor to the lord. The identification of God as a supreme lord coheres with the whole conception

Figure 1

CLASSICAL FEUDAL CLASS STRUCTURE



and legitimization of the feudal class structure.

Commodity production and trade was marginal. That is, most labor production was geared for direct consumption. A peasant grew potatoes for either his own or the landlord's direct household consumption. Very few of labor's products were either intended for or exchanged through a market. In short, the market did not mediate production and consumption; the products of labor were not commodities since a commodity is a product of labor which is exchanged in a market transaction. Hence, Engels noted, "The medieval peasant produced quit-rent-corn for his feudal lord and tithe-corn for his parson. But neither the quit-rent-corn nor the tithe-corn became commodities by reason of the fact that they had been produced for others. To become a commodity a product must be transferred to another, whom it will serve as a use-value, by means of an exchange."⁽⁴⁾ Feudal labor was primarily involved in the production of use values, unlike labor in capitalist societies which is primarily involved in the production of exchange values, i.e. commodities.

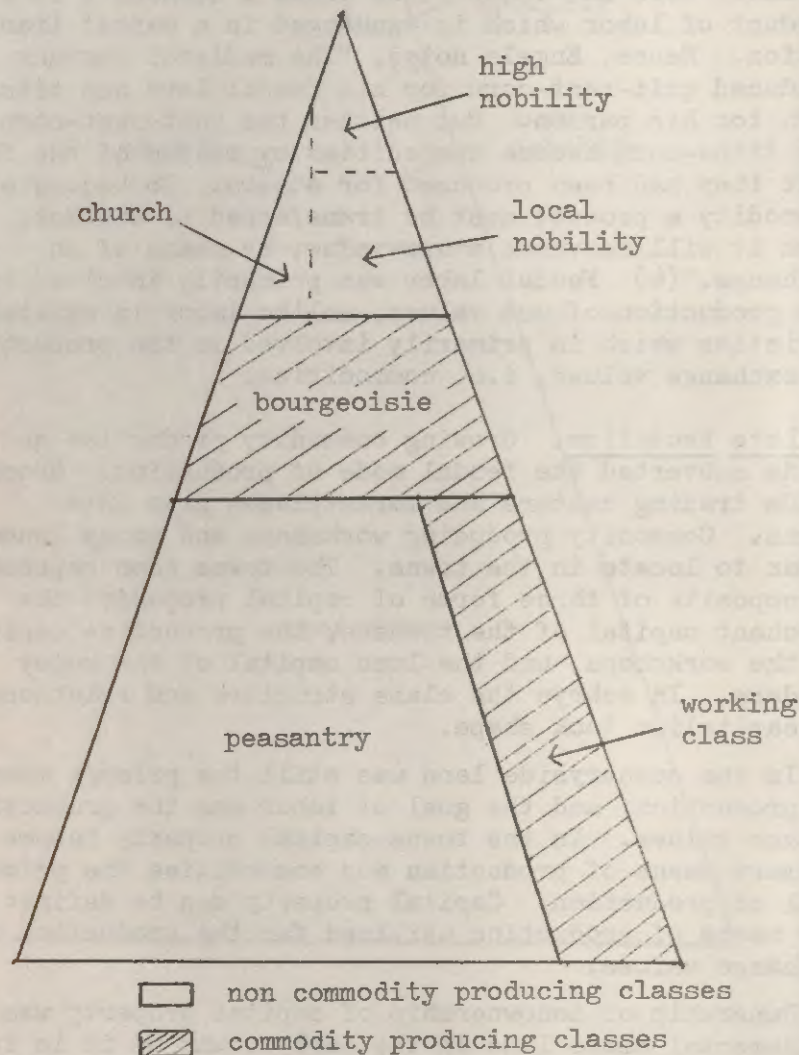
Late Feudalism. Growing commodity production and trade subverted the feudal mode of production. Cross-roads trading centers and marketplaces grew into towns. Commodity producing workshops and money lenders began to locate in the towns. The towns soon represented a composite of three forms of capital property: the merchant capital of the traders, the productive capital in the workshops, and the loan capital of the money lenders. In embryo the class structure and relations of capitalism took shape.

In the countryside land was still the primary means of production; and the goal of labor was the production of use values. In the towns capital property became the primary means of production and commodities the primary goal of production. Capital property can be defined as any means of production utilized for the production of exchange values.

Ownership or nonownership of capital property was the fundamental class line in the early towns as it is in all subsequent capitalist development. On one side stood the early bourgeoisie (the word 'bourgeois' is derived from the Latin word for 'town'); on the other side stood the

Figure 2

LATE FEUDAL CLASS STRUCTURE



early workers.

Figure 2 which portrays the late feudal class structure shows why the bourgeoisie were called in Nineteenth Century writing "the rising middle class." They were 'middle' because a class member was, as the Oxford English Dictionary put it, "distinguished from a peasant on the one hand, and a gentleman on the other"; they were 'rising' because of their growing actual economic and potential political power.

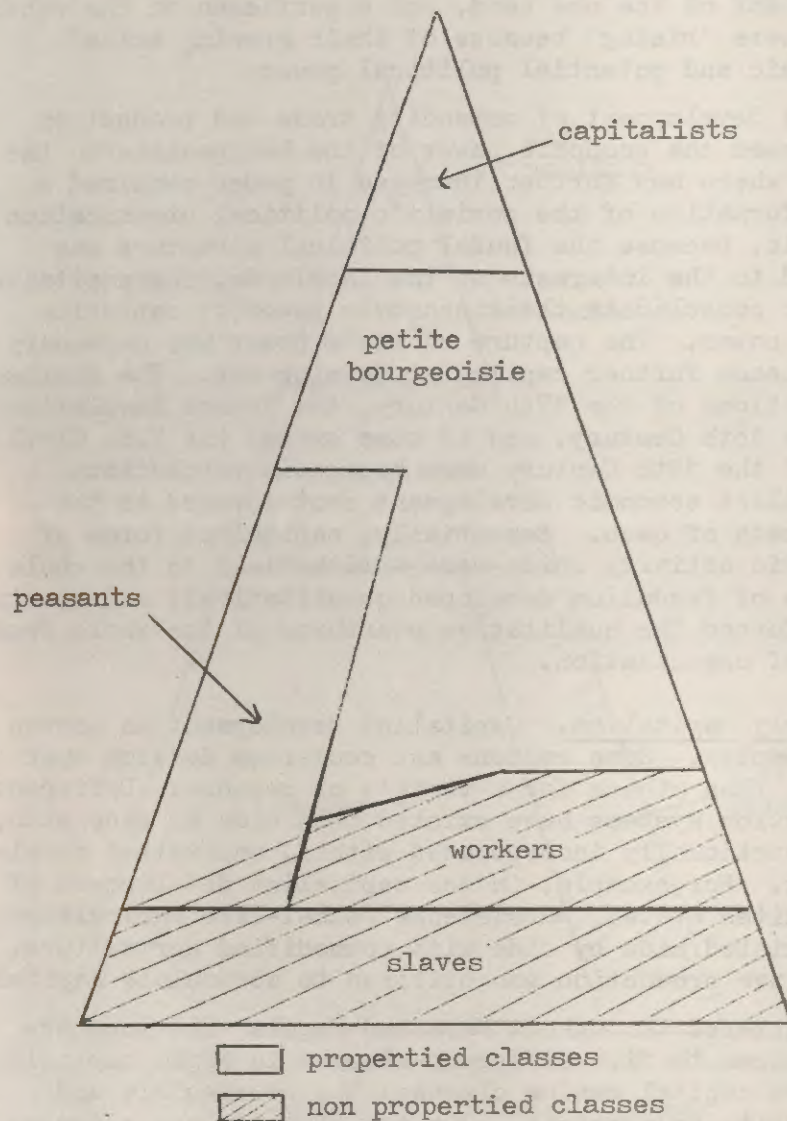
The development of commodity trade and production increased the economic power of the bourgeoisie to the point where any further increase in power required a transformation of the society's political organization. That is, because the feudal political structure was geared to the interests of the landlords, the capitalists had to consolidate their economic power by capturing state power. The capture of state power was necessary to unleash further capitalist development. The English Revolutions of the 17th Century, the French Revolution of the 18th Century, and to some extent the U.S. Civil War of the 19th Century were bourgeois revolutions. Capitalist economic development shot forward in the aftermath of each. Essentially, capitalist forms of economic activity which were antithetical to the whole nature of feudalism developed quantitatively and eventually forced the qualitative overthrow of the whole feudal form of organization.

Early Capitalism. Capitalist development is uneven and complex. Some regions and countries develop much faster than others for a variety of reasons. Different production systems have existed both side by side with, and functionally incorporated within, capitalist development. For example, in the capitalist development of the United States, subsistence feudal-like agriculture has existed side by side with commodified agriculture, and slave production was utilized to accumulate capital.

Scattered throughout Marx and Engels' writings are references to five different classes in early capitalism. Two are capital owning classes: the bourgeoisie and the petite bourgeoisie. Two are propertyless classes: the workers and the slaves. And one, the peasantry, is divided between property owners and nonproperty owners.

Figure 3

EARLY CAPITALIST CLASS STRUCTURE (U.S.)



Slaves and peasants are sizeable classes only in early capitalism.

Slaves are economically distinct from workers in that they do not even have the relative market freedom to sell their own labor power. Marx wrote, "The slave did not sell his labour power to the slave owner, any more than the ox sells its services to the peasant. The slave, together with his labour power, is sold once and for all to his owner. He is a commodity which can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another. He is himself a commodity, but the labour power is not his commodity."(5)

Capitalism has utilized several different types of unfree or slave labor. The most important was chattel slavery--the brutal enslavement for life of first the indigenous peoples of the Americas and then the kidnapped African peoples. Marx concluded that both the profits taken from the African slave trade and the value sweated out of the slaves in production contributed significantly to the accumulation of capital which laid the economic foundation for industrial capitalism.(6) Once the economic foundation for industrial capitalism had been laid though--a process which lasted over 300 years, the period of chattel slavery in the Americas--agrarian slave capitalism and its state needs proved to be an obstacle to further industrial capitalist development. The essential economic conflict of the U.S. Civil War was over which system of capitalist production would prevail: agrarian slave capitalism or industrial wage labor capitalism. Thus, chattel slave capitalism ended although, of course, its mark was institutionally burned into subsequent history.

There have been three less recognized types of unfree labor which must be included under the economic definition of the slave class. In the early stages of capitalist development there was a lucrative trade in indentured servants--individuals who bound themselves over or who were bound over to a master for 7 - 14 year periods in return for payment of their passage to the colonies. Many of the shipping companies involved in the African slave trade made their original capital from the indentured servant trade. At the time of the U.S. War of Independence from Great Britain it is estimated that

close to one-half of the Anglo-European population in the thirteen colonies were descended from indentured servants. Peonage is a form of slavery where the individual has to bind over to a master control of his future labor power because of accumulated debts. Marx wrote, "...slavery is hidden under the form of peonage. By means of advances, repayable in labour, which are handed down from generation to generation, not only the individual labourer, but his family, become, de facto, the property of other persons and their families." (7) The bottom rung of the sharecropping system in the South after the U.S. Civil War was occupied by ex-chattel slaves; their economic conditions of life closely approximated peonage slave conditions. Prison labor continues to this day to be a state administered form of forced slave labor. Any theory of the capitalist state has to take into account the extent to which the economy is dependent on such products of prison slave labor as road building, furniture production for state institutions, license plate stamping, and so forth.

A significant peasant class existed in the early period of capitalist development. A peasant is one who has day to day control over the means of production (the land) and whose labor is chiefly directed toward the production of use values rather than commodities. The cutting edge of the definition is the non-commodification of the labor. In contrast, a petite bourgeois or capitalist farm is one where commodity production for a market predominates. Thus, about the French peasantry Marx stated, "Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society." (8)

But peasant production increasingly contradicted the development of history. On the one hand, the peasant method of production (no division of labor, no application of science) falls behind the average level of the societal forces of production. On the other hand, taxes and other measures force the peasants into the money economy and commodity production where they are ill-equipped to compete. The typical cumulative effect is debt bondage. Eventually the land

was mortgaged to capital and, when worse came to worse, the capitalists foreclosed and the peasants were thrown off.

Middle Capitalism. Marx and Engels lived in the middle period of capitalist development which they dearly hoped would be its last period. Capitalism had evolved to basically a four class structure: a capitalist class in command, an ever diminishing petite bourgeoisie, an expanding working class, and a class of peonage slaves in the U.S. South.

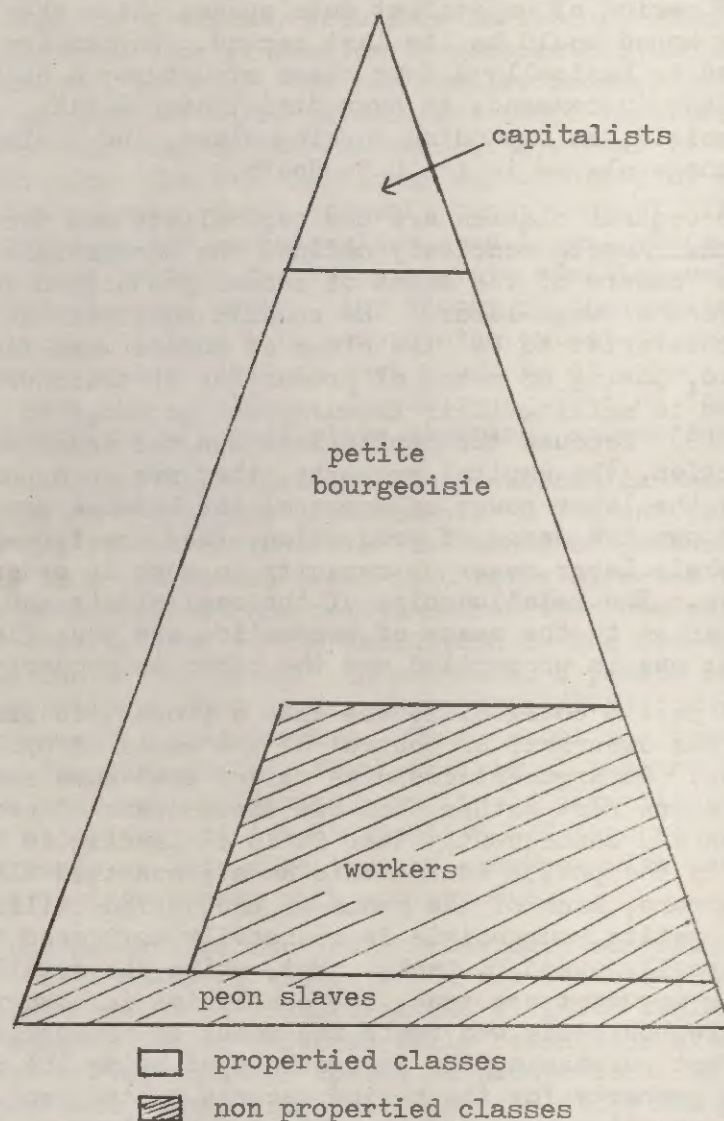
The central classes are the capitalists and the workers. Engels concisely defined the bourgeoisie to be the "owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labor." He equally concisely defined the proletariat to be "the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live." (9) Because the capitalists own the means of production, the capital property, they are in a position to buy the labor power of workers; and because workers do not own the means of production, they are forced to sell their labor power or capacity to work in order to survive. The relationships of the capitalists and the proletariat to the means of production are thus clear enough: one is propertied and the other is propertyless.

The petite bourgeoisie are also a propertied class which has ownership or control of the means of production. An argument could be raised that some small proprietors rent rather than own their means of production and consequently that it is misleading to refer to the petite bourgeoisie as a propertied class. Furthermore, much of the means of production utilized by the petite bourgeoisie is so heavily mortgaged that it is really owned by banks. But, while the details of this argument are true, the conclusion is unwarranted. A petite bourgeois who rents the means of production is in effect purchasing the prerogatives of being the owner of the property for the period covered by the rent. It is not at all uncommon for capitalist businesses, small or large, to purchase the use for given periods of time capital property owned by others.

Why is there a class line between the petite bourg-

Figure 4

MIDDLE CAPITALIST CLASS STRUCTURE (U.S.)



eoisie and the capitalist class proper if both are propertied? The reason is that the two classes have a qualitatively different economic relationship to the exploitation of wage labor. In contrast to the capitalist class proper, the petite bourgeoisie are not significant "employers of wage-labor" because the size of their capital property is too small. The petite bourgeois operation is so small that the working owner produces most of the value.

The difference between the petite bourgeois and the capitalist can also be expressed in Marxian value terms. Exchange value production requires constant and variable capital. Marx terms the means of production as constant capital. As intermediaries in the labor process, the means of production preserve and transfer value which was originally created by labor in its journey from raw material to finished commodity. Marx referred to labor power as variable capital because it is the element in the equation that accounts for the creation of surplus value at each step in the production process. The capitalist has workers for whom he can "vary" their labor time, the pace of work, and thus the surplus value produced; the petite bourgeois has only his or her own personal labor time and pace of work to "vary". If the capitalist exploits workers; the petite bourgeois, in a manner of speaking, "self exploits".

As in all classes, there are strata differences within the petite bourgeoisie. At the top are independent professionals and merchants; at the very bottom are the abysmally poor sharecropping and tenant farming operations which are just above peonage conditions.

In the long run the petite bourgeois class, as Marx put it, vegetates alongside the major capitalist and proletarian classes. The means of production at its command are too small to effectively compete in market situations. Progressively the petite bourgeois withdraw from the center to the margins of the economy. Businesses go under, the size of the class shrinks. Many are forced into the always growing working class.

Imperialist Capitalism. Marx and Engels only witnessed the beginnings of imperialism. The vitality and longevity of capitalism proved to be longer than they

had hoped. They had made the prediction that the working class would swell to encompass the majority of industrial capitalist populations. This prediction has come true in all advanced capitalist societies. The ranks of the proletariat have been swollen by ruined petite bourgeois, peasants driven off the land, and freed slaves; meanwhile the size of the capitalist class has diminished.

The petite bourgeoisie continues to hang on as a class in itself. Small businesses exist but they no longer occupy a central role in the economy. The size of the petite bourgeoisie in the United States has withered to no more than 10 percent of the population, down from close to 50 percent at the turn of the century. The ruin of small family farming accounts for most of the decline. There has also been a sizeable decline in the size of the urban petite bourgeoisie, i.e. the owners of small stores, workshops, independent professionals, and the like.

A major debate among Marxist researchers of the contemporary class structures is whether the descendents and class traits of the petite bourgeoisie, often called the old middle class, have emerged in a "new middle class" of privileged employees who stand between capital and labor. This question is obviously closely related to the question of defining the contemporary working class. To pose the question sharply, has a class break developed among the population of propertyless employed persons in monopoly capitalist (imperialist) societies such that there are now two propertyless classes?

Starting at the top of the hierarchy of employed persons, nearly all writers exclude top management in the state and private corporations from membership in the working class. Although nominally the managers are employees, a substantial part of their income comes from the ownership of stock and the inflated portions of their salaries derive from the surplus value created by workers.

The controversy begins with the next rungs down in the employee hierarchy: middle management, salaried professionals, scientists, and technicians. One

position identifies these employees as the top strata of an expanded working class. Typical of this position is an analysis which appeared in Socialist Revolution: "The highest-ranking workers in the job hierarchy are middle level management personnel, salaried professionals, university teachers and department heads, trade union bureaucrats (not including the highest levels) and middle-level government bureaucrats...it must be re-emphasized here that middle-level management is part of the working class."(10)

Paul Sweezy, on the other hand, assigns the strata of "government and business bureaucrats, professionals, teachers, journalists, advertizing men, and so on" to a new middle class between capital and labor.(11) Harry Braverman, with "certain reservations" identifies a new middle class with the following: "the engineering, technical, and scientific cadre, the lower ranks of supervision and management, the considerable numbers of specialized and 'professional' employees occupied in marketing, financial and organizational administration, and the like, as well as, outside of capitalist industry proper, in hospitals, schools, government administration, and so forth."(12)

Did Marx foresee the possibility of such a new class development among the propertyless? Possibly. Some proponents of the new middle class thesis have noted this remark by Marx about Ricardo in the Theories of Surplus Value: "What he forgets to emphasize is the constantly growing number of the middle classes, those who stand between the workman on the one hand and the capitalist and landlord on the other. The middle classes maintain themselves to an ever increasing extent directly out of revenue, they are a burden weighing heavily on the working base and increase the social security and power of the upper ten thousand."(13)

Unfortunately Marx never developed the remark. It represents no more than an off handed comment which could have several possible meanings; as such it is an extremely weak justification for new middle class theories. Part of the problem rests with the meaning of the term "middle class". The use of the adjective "middle" to describe a class is based, not on the relationship of the class to the means of production,

but rather on the status relationship of the class to other classes. Consequently, it is unclear to which middle classes Marx was referring. In all of his other writings, lower middle class referred to the petite bourgeoisie and upper middle class to the bourgeoisie. But then again, the only justification for continuing the anachronism of calling the capitalists a middle class when they had clearly become the ruling class was conventional usage. Perhaps, in the Ricardo comment, Marx was on to a new potential class formation, but we will never know.

Much more productive than the Ricardo comment for grounding the new middle class theory is Marx's general method. Since classes are based on qualitatively different relationships to the means of production, the new middle class if it exists must be based on a relationship to the means of production which is qualitatively different from that of workers.

Ownership or nonownership of the means of production is the first qualitative class distinction. But we have also seen that there is a qualitative class distinction among the propertied; i.e. between capitalists and petite bourgeois. The new middle class theory depends on the demonstration of the existence of a parallel qualitative material class distinction among the propertyless.

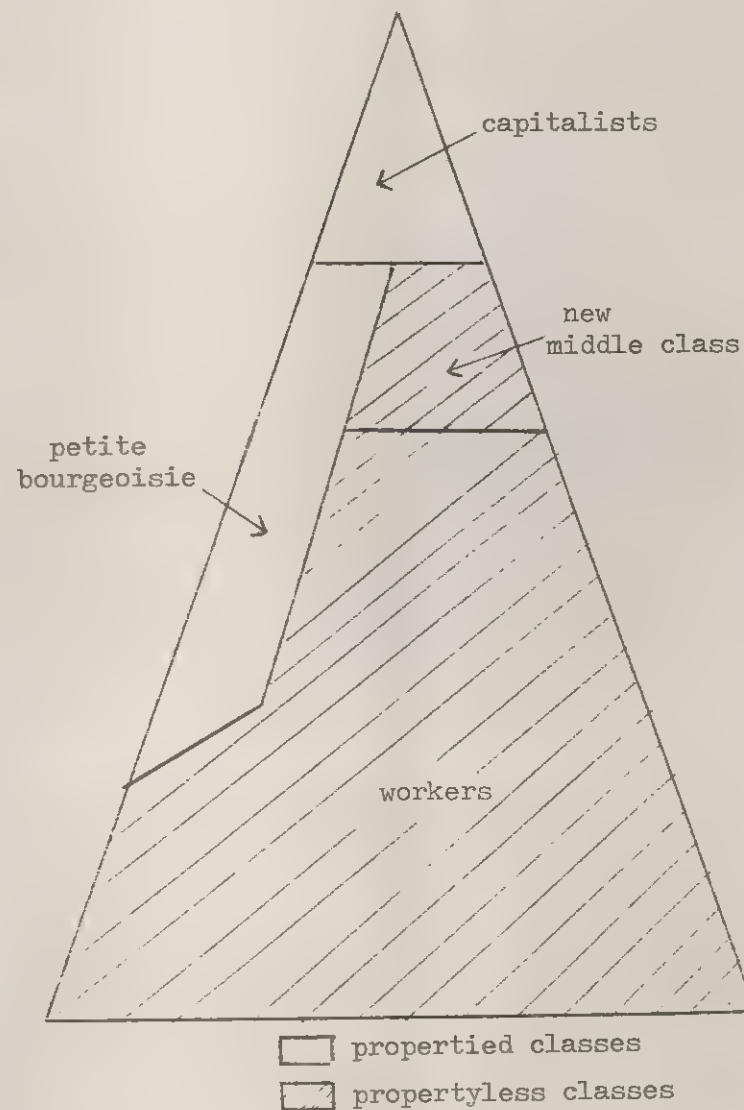
I believe that a qualitative class distinction among the propertyless employed population does exist. The material base for the class distinction is the differential market value of the labor power offered for sale.

The new middle class can sell their labor power at a much higher rate than the working class. This does not mean though that the labor power of the new middle class is necessarily in direct proportion more productive of surplus value. Entrance to many new middle class professions can be and often is restricted in order to keep the market value of the labor power artificially high. The restricted training of medical doctors in the United States is a common example of this practice.

What accounts for the different market values of labor power? The value of labor power, according to

Figure 5

IMPERIALIST CLASS STRUCTURE (U.S.)



Marx, is set like that of any other commodity by the quantity of socially necessary labor time which goes into its production. Higher value laboring powers require a greater investment of labor time in their production, maintenance, and reproduction. For example, more labor time is invested in the training of a nuclear physicist than in the training of an automobile assembler. But, it is also well known that the labor theory of value of which the determination of the value of labor power itself is one aspect was never meant to predict the actual market prices of different commodities. The labor theory of value rather predicts the underlying structure of the determination of prices; it states that the socially necessary labor time incorporated in the production of a commodity is the most powerful force determining its eventual price; other factors such as supply and demand relations can cause market prices of commodities to fluctuate above or below their labor time determined exchange values.

Monopoly capitalism (imperialism) magnifies the disjuncture between exchange values and market prices for the products of labor because monopoly corporations, largely immune to price competition, have the power to set prices artificially high. A parallel dynamic goes on in the labor market. Certain skills are monopolized and their price is set artificially high. These skills are concentrated in the new middle class. (What I am terming the new middle class is similar but not identical to what bourgeois sociologists call the upper middle class.)

The new middle class monopolizes those skills which fetch a high price on the labor market and restricts entrance to their ranks in order to keep from flooding the market. Higher educational institutions play a principle role in restricting entrance to the new middle class; only a minority are encouraged and allowed to obtain the professional degree which is often the entrance ticket to the new middle class occupation. The state often seals by law the entrance requirements to the new middle class. For example, in most states you have to have graduated from a certified law school to become a lawyer.

To the extent that the market values of the new middle class exceed its exchange value, the salaries of the new middle class are inflated, like those of upper level managers, from the exploitation of workers.

Five other factors stemming from the growth of imperialism contributed to the development of the new middle class. First, many new middle class occupations (corporate lawyers, clinic doctors, in-house accountants, etc.) used to be practiced by the petite bourgeoisie. The squeezing of the professional petite bourgeoisie simply changed the occupation from being propertied to being propertyless while retaining many of the same status privileges. Second, rising technology requires certain highly sophisticated skills (scientists, some technicians). Third, the socialization of production, i.e. the concentration of production into units which coordinate the labor of thousands and thousands of workers has increased the number of employees needed to supervise, oversee, and control the productive laborers. Fourth, the ruling class requires the maintenance of a middle status class for their own class security. The new middle class will mainly side with the ruling class in class struggles. Further, the maintenance of a new middle class is fertile ground for recruiting new blood into the ruling class and for coopting talent from the working class. Fifth, imperialist superprofits help to finance the new middle class.

With all the considerable problems of utilizing bourgeois census data for Marxist class analysis, it is possible, cum grano salis, to estimate the composition, income, and size of the new middle class in the United States. Table 1 shows the median income in 1970 for males who possessed the new middle class skills.

The median income for the U.S. new middle class male was in 1970 between \$12,000 and \$13,000--or roughly twice that of the working class male. (The median income for the entire male civilian labor force which includes capitalists, petite bourgeois, new middle class, and workers was only \$7,610 in 1970.)(14)

The polarization of labor market values has created two distinct class realities among the propertyless. On one side of the line stands the new middle class,

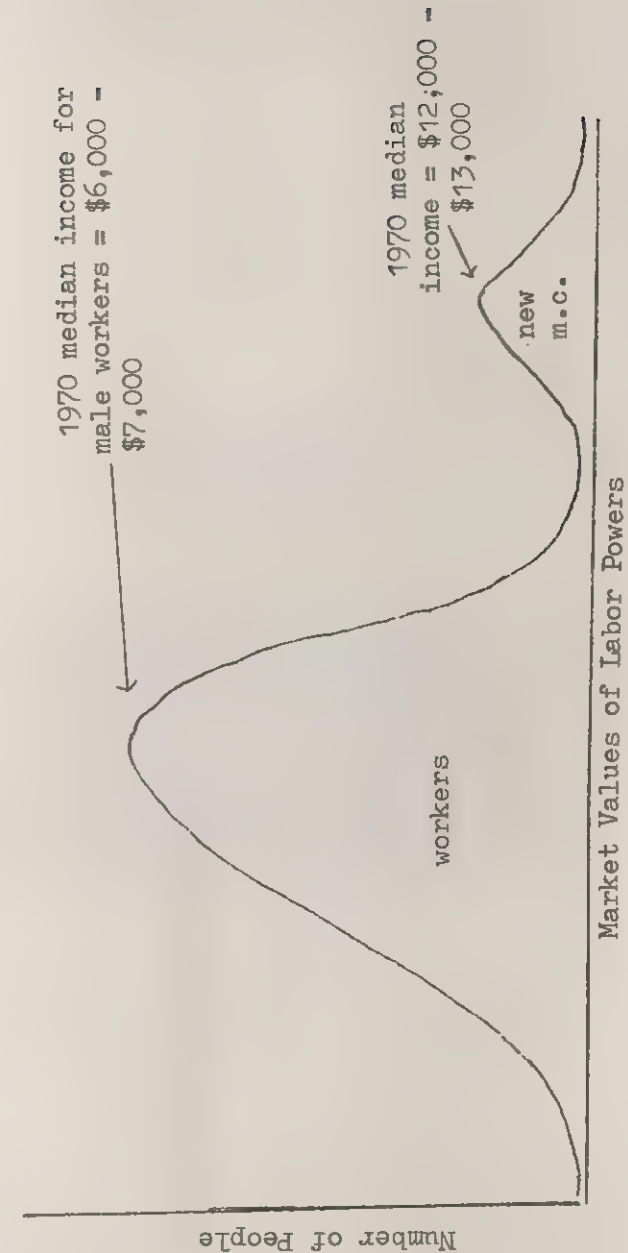
Table 1
MEDIAN SALARY BY OCCUPATION
NEW MIDDLE CLASS
(1970 males)

| Median Salary | Occupations |
|---------------------|--|
| \$10,500 - \$10,999 | Accountants |
| \$11,000 - \$11,999 | Computer specialists, certain technicians, college teachers, sales representatives for manufacturers, buyers, sales managers, chemists |
| \$12,000 - \$12,999 | Pharmacists, life and physical scientists, certain managers |
| \$13,000 - \$13,999 | Civil engineers, school administrators, electrical engineers, social scientists, mechanical engineers, architects |
| \$14,000 - \$14,999 | Aeronautical and astronomical engineers |
| \$15,000 - \$15,999 | Airline pilots, lawyers, dentists, physicians |

source: Statistical Abstract of the United States 1973, p. 235

Figure 6

DISTRIBUTION OF MARKET VALUES OF LABOR POWERS (U.S.)



a class possessing skills which command a high price on the labor market. But high salaries are not the only advantage they possess. On the job they enjoy much more freedom of motion. Essentially they are able to regulate the pace and intensity of their work and are free from close supervision; most likely they supervise others. Their income affords a comfortable style of life and security. Further, they have the resources to expensively educate their children such that the advantages can be passed on intergenerationally. On the other side of the line stands the white and blue collar working class.

The income of the working class allows for few of the comforts enjoyed by the new middle class. Increasingly both husband and wife have to get paying jobs, not so much to liberate the woman as to simply make ends meet. With the increasing breakup of nuclear family units, millions of other women take jobs in the expanding clerical and service sectors in order to support their children. On the job, the lot of the worker is much different than that of the new middle class employee. If the new middle class regulate their pace of work and often others, the working class is closely regulated. Managerial science continually perfects the rationalization of the work process to pump as much surplus value as possible out of the working class. Where the new middle class enjoys at least relative autonomy on the job, most of the employed working class are treated as machines.

Non-Marxist writers have also noted that distinctly separate realities exist among employed persons. Bourgeois sociologists claim that "autonomy" is a functional necessity for the professional to perform effectively on the job--of course they see no similar necessity for workers! Looking downward from Harvard, John Kenneth Galbraith whose prose is as apologetic of capitalism as it is pretentious notes the difference between people in the "technostructure" (which is close to the meaning of the new middle class) and the working class. Members of the technostructure "bring specialized knowledge, talent or experience to group decision-making" in the "new industrial state", while members of the white and blue collar working class function, Galbraith states bluntly, "to conform more or less

mechanically to instruction or routine."(15) Looking from the bottom up, liberal labor writer Andrew Levison goes so far as to state that "the distance a factory worker sees between himself and the middle class is almost as great as the distance the average black person sees between himself and white America."(16)

The existence of two separate economic realities justifies the conclusion that a new largely propertyless class has emerged between capital and labor. Requoting Marx, "In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class."(17) The mode of life of the highly paid new middle class is clearly distinct from that of the bulk of the working class.

What difference does it make whether you interpret this strata as a new middle class or the top strata of an expanded working class? There are three reasons among others for insisting on the importance of recognizing this strata as a separate class. First, to the extent that there is a qualitative class break among the propertyless as argued above, scientific accuracy demands the identification of a new middle class. Second, few workers would disagree that college professors, corporate lawyers, engineers, and middle managers are in a different class than themselves. Third, in terms of the goals of a socialist revolution, the identification of the new middle class as a different class from the working class places them outside of the base of the dictatorship of the proletariat; the new middle class must serve socialist construction, not direct it.

Proportionately, in the United States today the working class is about 67 percent of the population, the new middle class about 13 percent, the petite bourgeoisie about 10 percent, and the capitalists about 10 percent.

To conclude, it must be reiterated that this article makes no pretense at being a full class analysis; it is only a beginning step. There are divisions within all of the classes which have to be analyzed. This is

particularly true for the working class where differences of privilege, nationality, sex, location, level of organization, and many other factors have to be considered in understanding both the dynamics of the class structure and the prerequisites for organizing strategies.

Footnotes:

1. The distinction between the class in itself and the class for itself is mentioned by Marx in The Poverty of Philosophy, Moscow 1955, p. 150
2. Marx, Capital, Volume 1, Moscow n.d., p. 202
3. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Volume 1, Moscow 1969, p. 479
4. Engels, added note to Marx's text in Capital, Volume 1, p. 48
5. Marx, "Wage Labour and Capital", Selected Works, Volume 1, p. 153
6. Marx, Capital, Volume 1, p. 703
7. Marx, ibid., p. 165n
8. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, p. 478
9. Engels, footnote added in 1888 to all editions of The Communist Manifesto
10. Francesca Freedman, "The Internal Structure of the American Proletariat: A Marxist Analysis", Socialist Revolution, October-December 1975, pp. 63ff
11. Paul Sweezy, "The American Ruling Class", reprinted in Sweezy, The Present as History, p. 128
12. Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital, pp. 403ff
13. Marx, Theories of Surplus Value, Part 2, Moscow 1968, p. 573

14. Statistical Abstract of the United States 1973, p. 235
15. John Kenneth Galbraith, The New Industrial State, New York 1972, p. 84
16. Andrew Levison, The Working-Class Majority, New York 1974, p. 36
17. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, p. 479

Appendix

SUMMARY DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Non-commodity Producing Classes

Landlord Class: This class is based on the ownership or control of large amounts of land which is not utilized chiefly for commodity production. The landlord's source of income is ground-rent in kind or money. The major internal economic or strata categories in the class are the estates of the local nobility, high nobility, and the church.

Peasant Class: A peasant is one who has day to day control over small patches of land (i.e. means of production) and whose work is directed chiefly toward the production of use values--not commodities. Engels listed three types of peasants: feudal peasants who perform corvee services for a lord; tenant farmers who rent from a landlord; and peasants who own their small patches of land. (The Peasant War in Germany, Moscow 1965, p. 15)

Commodity Producing Classes

Capitalist Class (the Bourgeoisie): "...the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labor." (Engels, 1888 footnote to The Communist Manifesto). The major internal economic or strata categories of the capitalist class have been landlords, slave owners, merchants,

industrialists, financiers, large farm owners, rentiers, and upper management in private industry and the state.

Small Business Class (the Petite Bourgeoisie); Small proprietors who do not significantly employ wage or salaried labor. The major internal economic or strata categories within the petite bourgeoisie are small merchants, farmers, artisans, and professionals who own their own businesses.

New Middle Class: Employees whose labor power commands a significantly higher price on the labor market than the labor power of workers. A class which is formed in monopoly capitalist (imperialist) conditions. The major internal economic or strata categories within the new middle class are salaried professionals, middle-level managers, some technicians, and some salespeople.

Working Class (the Proletariat): "...the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live." (Engels, 1888 footnote to The Communist Manifesto). Today the working class would also include many salaried as well as wage laborers. Marx and Engels' writings contain the following economic and strata categories within the working class: 1. The labor aristocracy - craft workers; 2. Bulk of the proletariat; 3. Surplus army of the unemployed. Within the surplus army is the lumpen-proletariat or criminal population.

Slave Class: Laborers who do not own the means of production and who do not own their own labor power. Serfs were a type of pre-commodity producing slaves. The major types of slaves in commodity producing societies are chattel slaves, indentured servants, peons, and prison labor.



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